The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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A BRICK BLOCK.

Eight small brick houses standing side by side;
Eight flights of steps, narrow and long and steep;
Different dimensions,—all nineteen feet wide,
Some forty-two, some forty-three feet deep;
Each with a curved bow-window and a dome;
So much alike that children in their doubt
Must count, poor things, to know which house is home!
Commonplace people walking in and out,—
A curious thing to write a poem about!

And yet inside are men as wise as we,
And happy, though with little cause for mirth:
To each his nineteen feet by forty-three
Seems the important corner of the earth.
Each has his secret tears, his open jest;
Each has his pride in the brick cell he calls
His home, and somehow knows it from the rest.
Those narrow rooms are his ancestral halls,
His little universe within four walls.

These men give plays, lifelike beyond belief,
Whose actors really live and really die,
So full of nonsense and so full of grief
One scarcely knows whether to laugh or cry.
Here some Antonio mourns his unpaid debt;
There a real Shylock counts his darling hoards;
Here a real Romeo sighs for Juliet.
Think what great sights this little block affords:
Eight first-class Shakspere's plays are on the boards!

The lover cannot see. His dancing eyes
Detect no fault, no ugliness, no sin:
His sweetheart's house seems fair as Paradise
Because he knows his sweetheart is within.
I, too, am growing blind. I cannot see
The ugly house-front or the narrow stair:
Those unknown friends are very dear to me;
And, as I gaze across the dingy square,
Eight homes of those I love are standing there.

—*Robert Beverly Hale.*

THE LIFE TO COME.

Now what are the ideas that have been brought forward about the life to come? We have given up the idea of a physical or local heaven, and are able to say in simple, direct words that heaven is a condition, and that hell is a condition, too, and that, if we choose, we can light up the flames of a veritable hell inside of ourselves at a moment's notice. Go through a passion of revenge, go through a Laertes storm of jealousy as Shakspere could delineate it, and at once you have within a hell of hate and envy, and these fierce fires lick up your very heart's blood. Go through a tempest of hate. Whom does that hurt? Not often the person whom you hate so much as the hater. It hurts your poor self so much that for months and months afterward you are blackened and charred and destroyed with the flames that you lit up inside of yourself. What is heaven? Heaven is when, in a moment of depression and loneliness, it may be, our brother man, the Antonio of

our Caliban, a sinner, has come to us, needing our pity and our love, and through our great thoughtlessness of ourselves and our great thought of him, into his wan face there creeps the light which is the very light of God, the sunshine of gratitude and new hope. That is heaven when we jump into the selfless joy of lifting up some other soul: that is heaven, and that is ours here and now.

Is not this life so very imperfect that the more good we are, and successful we become, the more we reach up with passionate desire for the things that we cannot achieve, that would add to our perfection, but are beyond us, in sight, but out of reach as yet? It is one of the most hopeful signs of the day, this wail of misery and terror over the imperfections and failures of the present. When men and women were shut down in isolation, without either newspapers or periodicals, pulpit or social intercourse with their fellows, without meetings or lectures to keep them in touch with the aspiration of their brothers, they had no sense of the sum total of human sorrow and joy. They knew only their own corner, and sometimes that was terrible enough; but they knew also it was not greater than they could bear and had borne. You and I have never in our individual life had a trouble too heavy to carry, a burden too great to be borne, a necessity too strong for us to wrestle with. If we had, we should not be here. In the individual life, our sorrow is bearable; but when, through increased knowledge, higher intelligence, and greater sympathy, we multiply our sorrow by all the sorrow of the world, our little load of pain by all the other pain of the world that other people are carrying, it is then we stand on the border land of a fresh revelation, of a larger self that is capable of being pained by pain not our own, and the pain and darkness and the uncertainty are almost unbearable. And now, if in that hour men and women lose their hold upon God, if they lose their faith in the eternal principles of life and love, and cease believing that there is a Perfection working outside and inside of man to bring about his ultimate perfection, their pity for pain becomes scorn of its uselessness, and faith in the majesty of man becomes cynicism for his weakness: love dies, effort on behalf of development becomes ridiculous, and despair or sensuality consumes all else.

O men! O women! the to me majestic proof of the certainty that I am going on when this heart ceases to beat is that, the older and more loving I grow, the more I begin to hear voices that I never dreamed of when I knew and thought and cared less. The more I think, the more I feel, the more I care, the better I know that knowledge shall not cease, but shall go on. The more I know, the more I care, the more I see rising higher and higher the snow-peaks of aspiration, of which before I had no sight. If you want to increase your seeing power, use your eyes, and do not close them. If you want to hear better, use your ears and listen in every direction, and do not stop them up. If you want to be able to feel what other people are feeling, forget your own feelings and feel theirs; and you will jump into the great divine selflessness that becomes at last the perfect individual.

And now I am very reverently to speak of God's side of it, as I have spoken of our side of it. Think of the ball of clay speaking of the divine hand of the potter, of the worm discussing the gardener. Nay, nothing so servile as that. Think of the child in the darkness that has heard his father's voice, who knows he is there, though he may not see him, but who dares to think what he is like and dares to speak to him. What is God's attitude to us? He is life and love. Hold to that. Hold to that, and you may send theology to the four winds with the utmost content. Hold on to that, —that God is love. Out of that can be built up all the religiousness, all the worship, all the love and life of this world. Now picture God making these marvellous human beings, no two alike physically and mentally, and certainly no two alike spiritually. Think of the infinite pains spent even on the body, the minuteness of its cells, the marvellousness of its arterial valves, the miracle of its nerve-ganglion, of that silent warning within us, sounding its beat day and night, night and day, through the long years of our life, without any control of our own. And think of God manifesting such skill in everybody that environs us. Think of our marvellous intellect. Think of an Edison with his phonograph, of the mystery of the telegraph wire, how

from Boston one can send in half an hour a loving message to the dear home on the other side of the Atlantic, that brings smiles to the faces of the children and joy to the husband's heart. Who has evolved this? No Gabriel has come down from heaven, proclaiming it with trumpet-blasts. It is the still, patient evolution of the mind of man, thinking on and on through the centuries, on the rising lines of thought of those who had gone before. Though they did not know it, men were thinking toward the consummation of the phonograph and of the telegraph ages before it came. Think of God giving men such power, a bit of himself, that man, small image of his Creator, can in his turn become a creator, because he has been gathering together the forces of God, and is able to throw them into form in this fashion. Think of the lives of all these bygone people, think of their prayers and their hymns. If I wanted but one proof that God is the Creator of man, I should find it in the hymnology of the world and its continuity of emotion.

O women! O men! after all the patient walk that you and I have trodden, the painful hours that we have lived before that final change that we call death, if we catch a glimpse of our Father, and with our failing breath say: "Father, Father, I have longed to come home. The earth has had many bright spots for me; but I have been far, and I have had much darkness, much hard work, and, dear Father, I am tired: I should be glad to lay life down," what will the Father say? Will he say, "Your fatigue shall become everlasting destruction, and the fact that you can look me in the face and call me 'Father' will now mean that I shall cut your existence off forever"? Oh, no! oh, no! There is no common sense in that. There is no science in it, there is no religion in it. I believe as truly as I stand here that, when in the curious silence of that solemn change I lay down the voice that has spoken to so many thousands of people, and the hands that have worked so hard with brush and instrument, or needle and pen, and the feet that have been so swift to travel over the world, that are too tired to travel any more,—I believe that I shall lay down only the outward and visible "me" that people looked on, and was all they knew of the inner me, and that *the real I* shall spring at once, as one refreshed from sleep, with no sense of change in me, with just the character and attributes I have gained here, into the next life, where God, my Father, will know better than I can dream of now what manner of life I am fit for, what manner of work I can do best. Rest is change of occupation. It will be no Nirvana that will bring rest for you and me. It will be the glorious change of occupation; and it may be that God—who knows far better than we do how grand the transition that is going on in our spiritual life, and how beautiful is the gleam of glory that is shining out from us even here and now—may be designing that some one of us shall breathe diviner air before this year is out. O brothers! O sisters! it will not be good-by forever. It will be merely that we shake hands, dimly seeing each other's reflection in the mirror of this life. In the next life we shall know each other better than here. We shall love each other better; and God, our Father, will find for us a more congenial work and place.

"Shall we who wait through long, dark nights of weeping,
And cry so long for that slow-coming morn,
Receive as answer but eternal scorn,
And sink at last in hopeless, helpless sleeping?"

No: the principle of life is the principle of eternal waking, of increasing intelligence, of purer devotion, of higher power of worship. Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words. Quit you like men and women. Be strong, and rest assured, as you look on the floods of crime and sorrow and poverty, that they are the ocean of man's blunders, on which he sails to God. What we know not now we shall know in that far-off day. We shall know God as all this time he has known us. It is he who has led us along the path which he would have us follow.

Take these thoughts with you, spread them about, live them, act them. Conscious sin will then become impossible to you. Any leaning toward vice and selfishness will become difficult. You will ever fix your eyes upon the light, and the light will guide you onward until the night be gone, and we clasp hands in the spiritual realm with those that we love and once said that we had lost.—*Laura Ormiston Chant.*

THE STILL HOUR.

THE DAY'S WORK.

Do thy day's work, my dear,
Though fast and dark the clouds are drifting near,
Though time has little left for hope, and very much for fear.

Do thy day's work, though now
The hand must falter and the head must bow,
And far above the failing foot shows the bold mountain brow.

Yet there is left for us,
Who on the valley's verge stand trembling thus,
A light that lies far in the west,—soft, faint, but luminous.

We can give kindly speech
And ready, helping hand to all and each,
And patience to the young around by smiling silence teach.

We can give gentle thought,
And charity, by life's long lesson taught,
And wisdom, from old faults lived down, by toil and failure wrought.

We can give love, unmarred
By selfish snatch of happiness, unjarred
By the keen aims of power or joy that make youth cold and hard.

And, if gay hearts reject
The gifts we hold, would fain fare on unchecked
On the bright roads that scarcely yield all that young eyes expect,

Why, do thy day's work still:
The calm, deep founts of love are slow to chill;
And Heaven may yet the harvest yield, the work-worn hands to fill.

—*All the Year Round.*

So God educates us for himself, teaches us how to love him by teaching us first how to love our brother. All true love educates us for heaven. The love of nature is a nascent piety. The delight in God's sky and land, his ocean and mountains, his stars and flowers, his sunrises and sunsets, educates us to love him, the Giver of it all. He sends us little children to teach our hearts tenderness: he takes them up to himself, and our tenderness goes up to heaven. The love for heaven, for books, for children, for friends, leads us toward God. Every generous effort to do right, every noble struggle against evil, every warm throb of love for what is good, true, fair, every patriotic and courageous act of devotion to our country, is preparing us for heaven.

Therefore, O human heart, trust and hope and look forward, and do not doubt nor fear, but go from truth to truth, from love to higher love. We do not wish to be unclothed of this world's affections and interests, but clothed upon with higher. This life is not the end, but the beginning. This poor body of ours—poor, but yet wonderful in its mysterious faculties—is the germ of a higher body. The friend who has left us, the dear child, sister, brother, father, mother, we shall meet again. Yet that heavenly love shall be as tender and as near as in this world,—a home for our heart, as it was below.—*James Freeman Clarke, in "Messages of Faith, Hope, and Love."*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any

one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper* books are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, *when issued periodically*.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Mrs. Caroline W. Putnam, 20 Sheldon Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers the following: "Knight Errant," Edna Lyall; "An Old Maid's Love," Maarten Maartens; "A Son of Hagar," "The Bondman," Hall Caine; "A Seventh Son," John Strange Winter; odd numbers of *Harper's Magazine*, *Scribner*, *Century*, and others; odd numbers of *Christian Register*.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers the following lessons on the Life of Jesus (formerly printed in *The Cheerful Letter*) to any Sunday-school teacher or minister: "Jesus in the Temple"; "John the Baptist"; "The Baptism of Jesus"; "The Temptation"; "Jesus in the Synagogue"; "Life at Capernaum"; "A First Lesson on the Sermon on the Mount"; "The Little Daughter of Jairus"; "The Maniac of Gadara"; "The Young Man of Nain"; "The Sermon on the Mount in Luke"; "The Walk in the Cornfield"; "Healing the Centurion's Servant"; and, shortly to be reprinted, several more.

REQUESTS.

Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from: —

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Miss Amy L. Kirby, South Robbinston, Maine, will be glad to receive "The Lamplighter."

"Pilgrim's Progress" and "Wide, Wide World" are asked for by Mrs. Sarah Bowen, Ben Franklin, Delta County, Texas.

I am eighteen years old, and have three own brothers and my father. My mother died when I was quite small. After seven years papa married again; and now we have a little brother and sister, aged nine and six. Mamma has been very kind to me. I have joined the Baptist church with her; while papa is a member of the Christian church. We live seven miles from Madison, and too far from any school-house for me to attend school. I read all the books and papers I can afford from our limited means, as papa is a renter of land and can spare but little for books. I should like very much to correspond with some of *The Cheerful Letter* friends near my own age and to receive a few good books. Edna Pharis, Rockingham County, North Carolina.

I am very lonely now. I would like to receive some historical books. I would be very grateful for the Life of the Empress Josephine or any recent magazines. My health is worse this summer. I thank all the kind friends who have sent me reading. Please address (Miss) Fannie Adams, care of G. F. Adams, Cedartown, Polk County, Georgia.

Will some one send me the *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Demorest's Magazine* after reading them? Mrs. Mary B. Keech, Calmar, Iowa.

We live on top of the Blue Ridge, about two miles from Floyd, our county seat. My mother is a poor widow, and I have one sister and one brother at home. We farm on a very small scale,—keep cows, raise chickens, and have plenty of fruit.

We all belong to the Lutheran Church and attend Sunday-school and preaching, when able. My health has never been good, and for a long while I was shut in; but God has blessed me with strength to be able to help mother and sister with their household duties again.

I should be very much pleased to have several *Cheerful Letter* correspondents and to receive some nice reading matter. I dearly love to read; and we have no library near us, and can afford only a very few books. Mother has two little motherless grandchildren living with her,—Clarence, aged seven, and Mary Lou, aged three. We would appreciate any little books or papers sent them. Rosalia Sowers, Floyd, Virginia.

A few years ago some kind friends sent my mother some *Cheerful Letters*, also some very nice books. We read them all with interest, and lent them to others.

Of late we have received *The Cheerful Letter*, but we should be very glad to have some kind friends send us some reading matter. We will lend all that is sent to our neighbors, who, like ourselves, are fond of reading, but cannot afford the money to buy books. I should like historical, poetical, or any good, interesting, and instructive reading. Should like to correspond with some young ladies of about my own age—eighteen—that live in some other State. Miss Hattie L. Crogan, North Winterport, Maine.

Dear Cheerful Letter,—I wish to thank all who have sent me reading matter for distribution this summer, and would ask that no more be sent to my present address, as we intend to move to Kansas soon,—perhaps before the middle of October. Then my address will be Chase, Rice County, Kansas.

The reading I have given away has been very much appreciated. I could have disposed of a great deal more. When we first moved here, I could not hear of many who wished reading matter; and I refused some that was offered for that purpose, but this summer I found several who were anxious for something to read. One poor woman requested a neighbor, who had carried her something wrapped in a newspaper, not to destroy the paper; for she had not had anything to read for so long, she wanted to read it. I heard of it, and sent her a lot of good home papers and magazines. She was so pleased with them.

I know from experience what it is to be hungry for reading.

At times this summer I have wished for something new to read. I have been confined to the house ever since May, not able to work very much; and I would have been so glad for new reading. I have read everything I have and all that has been sent for distribution, and still had not enough to fill up all the time. The days seemed so long and wearisome to me.

After we move to Kansas, I want to get some house plants and bulbs and next spring plenty of outdoor plants; and I would be so glad if any one would send me any floral papers, particularly the *Mayflower*. I dearly love flowers. This summer I have not seen scarcely any, and I am so anxious to own some. I would be glad to hear from any one who cares to write to me, and will still give away reading when any is sent for that purpose. But do not send any more to my present address. Mrs. Carrie Smith, Jamison, Iowa.

Miss Mattie Alger, Boisé City, Idaho, asks for "Darkness and Daylight" or any good reading.

A number of requests are omitted because not addressed to the secretary of the Book Club.

To Miss Bettie Ferguson: It is of no use to write to a member for a book she has not offered, saying you have not stamps to write to the person who did offer it. But we hereby remind members to keep their correspondents supplied with postal cards.

The real time to work is when indolence most tempts, is most fertile and ingenious in expedient and argument. You do your best work then, if you will.—*J. F. W. W.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

RIDDLES.

1.

I have a trunk with two lids, two caps, two musical instruments, two established measures, and a great number of articles a carpenter cannot dispense with. Then I have always about me two fine fish, and a great number of smaller ones, two lofty trees, fine flowers, and the fruit of an indigenous plant, two playful animals, and a number of smaller and less tame breed, a fine stag, some whips without handles, some weapons of warfare, and a number of weathercocks, the steps of a hotel, the House of Commons on the eve of a division, two students or scholars and some Spanish grandees, two places of worship, a piece of money, the summit of a hill, a lowly bed, some harmonies in music, two travellers, a portion of land, the product of the camphor-tree, part of a carriage, a kind of boat, and something used to cross a river.

2.

I walked on earth, I talked on earth,
Reproving man for sin.
I'm not in earth, I'm not in heaven,
And never shall get in.

3.

Cut off my head, and singular I am.
Cut off my tail, and plural I appear,
Cut off both head and tail, I nothing am
Both to the deaf man's sight and blind man's ear.

What is my head cut off? A sounding sea.
What is my tail cut off? A flowing river,
Beneath whose sparkling waves my whole doth play,
Parent of sweetest sounds, yet mute forever.

BIBLICAL ENIGMA.

I am composed of 80 letters.

My 45, 26, 20, 24, 73, 7, 65, was Rebekah's nurse.

My 32, 7, 14, 15, the birthplace of a giant.

My 6, 13, 18, 40, 1, 27, a prophet in the time of David.

My 65, 30, 51, 35, 57, Sarah's hand-maiden.

My 22, 61, 33, 19, 75, 49, 39, 46, 62, 42, one of the books of the Old Testament.

My 12, 16, 40, 55, 20, 3, 74, 8, a king who had to fight for his throne.

My 77, 4, 70, 38, 43, 28, 15, was worsted in a fight with my 5, 30, 71, 49, 76.

My 80, 7, 67, 69, 21, 79, a revealer of dreams.

My 66, 7, 63, 19, 31, a high priest.

My 13, 27, 44, 35, a prophetess.

My 52, 9, 25, 36, 56, 68, a Roman governor.

My 48, 53, 68, 23, 64, 10, a queen.

My 47, 79, 69, 54, 34, 25, is a mountain.

My 2, 41, 6, 50, 72, 11, 59, 17, 26, 14, is a lake in Palestine.

My 37, 78, 8, 41, a city of note.

My 58, 56, 60, 29, a great-grandmother of David.

My whole is a verse from the Book of Proverbs.

Answers to puzzles in the September number: —

PUZZLES.

1. It was *and*, I said, not *or*.
2. There was an old lady, and she
   Was as deaf as a *p*, *o*, *s*, *t*.

CHARADES.

1. Target. 2. The letter O.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*All articles for this department should be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

WHEN AND HOW DO WE EDUCATE?

Last evening, as I walked along one of the quiet streets where people of more than average means and culture live, my attention was drawn to a picturesque group of bright, active children, from three years old upward, playing on the sidewalk.

As is always the case where there are children of any grade or condition, the scene was full of interest; for one cannot forget that the coming man or woman lies in every child, and that in every group of children is the society of thirty years hence, —good or not, as we make it. And I said to myself: "Here is promise! These children look as if they were understood and wisely cared for." And probably they are excep-

tionally favored children. The parents would say, and think they said it intelligently, that the safety of the individual and of the nation lies in education; and we are, therefore, justified in making it compulsory.

But what do we mean by education? And, as fathers and mothers, and as citizens, how do we relate ourselves to this very correct theory? What foundation do we lay, theoretically or practically, for securing the high ideal we all have as the result of a complete education? Our inconsistencies are indeed many in this respect, and grave enough to make all the difference between success and failure in the lives of these children who are supposed to be so entirely educated at the public schools.

On the evening mentioned I saw an illustration of the preparation we give, that may be duplicated in spirit in every street in the city. An hour later I returned through the same street, and lingered a few minutes with a friend opposite where I had seen the children at play. It had been very warm, and through the open windows I could hear the children fretting with the oppressive heat, as they were being put to bed by their nurses. The fathers and mothers were on the steps and sidewalk, struggling with the heat, as were the little ones upstairs. One little girl of two or three refused to be quieted by the nurse, and the mother called up to her to "bring Tillie down and put her in the cellar if she did not stop crying." Here were three mistakes, and one sentence expressed them all. There was entire lack of sympathy with the child's discomfort; there was delegating authority to a servant; and threatening (which is never wise discipline) a cruel punishment. And probably there was an untruth, for the mother could not have meant to put the child in the cellar at all.

Scarcely five minutes had passed, when another mother called up to her baby of three who had failed to go to sleep, "Mary, there is a policeman down here; and he wants to know what that dreadful noise is!"

There was silence immediately; but at what a cost to mother and child! Each of these mothers was educating her child to put no confidence in her statements; and this education was the more emphatic and dangerous because it was entering unconsciously into the growing life.

Later, when the full-grown plant of disobedience confronts these mothers, they will murmur at this "degenerate age," and wonder at the influence of "bad companions." Perhaps they will take the children out of the public school, and place them at great expense in some school where the "influences are not so demoralizing." Little will they see that they planted the tiny seed with their own hand, far back in the baby life, and nourished the growing plant while it took deep root among the virtues, which would have possessed the ground alone but for this unfortunate planting. And they will fail to find, in any school in the world, an opportunity to undo these mistakes, however they may be polished over. The ideal education must begin in babyhood,—directed by deep wisdom and great consecration.—*Selected from "Babyhood."*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST AND THE GIFT OF TONGUES (*continued*).

"The city of Jerusalem at that moment was crowded by a miscellaneous multitude of Jews and proselytes. It was inevitable that the awful sound* should arrest the astonished attention, first of one, then of more, lastly of a multitude of the inhabitants and passers-by. The age, an age which was in keen expectation of some divine event; the day, the great anniversary of Pentecost and of Sinai; the hour, when people were already beginning to throng the streets on their way to the temple service,—would all tend to swell the numbers, and intensify the feelings of the crowd. Up the steps, which led outside the house to the 'upper room,' they would first begin to make their way, in twos and threes, and then to press in larger numbers, until their eagerness, their obtrusion, their exclamations of fear, surprise, admiration, insult, could not fail to break the spell. The Church, for the first time, found itself face to face with the world,—a world loud in its expressions of perplexity, through which broke the open language of hate and scorn. That which fixed the attention of all the

* Compare in the Old Testament the cases of Saul, etc. (1 Sam. x. 11; xviii. 10; xix. 23, 24).

better portion of the crowd was the fact that these 'Galileans' were magnifying, in strange tongues, the mercies and power of God. But most of the spectators were filled with contempt at what seemed to them to be a wild fanaticism. 'These men,' they jeeringly exclaimed, 'have been indulging too freely in the festivities of Pentecost.* They are drunk with sweet† wine.'

"It was the prevalence of this derisive comment which forced upon the apostles the necessity of immediate explanation.‡ 'The spirits of the prophets,' as Saint Paul says, with that masculine practical wisdom which in him is found in such rare combination with burning enthusiasm, 'are subject unto the prophets.'§ The apostles were at once able, not only to calm their own exaltation, but also, even at this intense moment, to hush into absolute silence the overmastering emotion of their brethren. They saw well that it would be fatal to their position as witnesses to a divine revelation if anything in their worship could, however insultingly, be represented as the orgiastic exhibition of undisciplined fervor. It was a duty to prove from the very first that the Christian offered no analogy to the fanatical fakeer. Clearing the room of all intruders, making a space for themselves at the top of the steps, where they could speak in the name of the brethren to the surging throng who filled the street, the apostles came forward; and Peter assumed the office of their spokesman. Standing in attitude and speaking in a tone which commanded attention,‖ he first begged for serious attention, and told the crowd that their coarse suspicion was refuted at once by the fact that it was but nine o'clock. He then proceeded to explain to them that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel,—that, among other signs and portents of the last days, there should be a special effusion of the spirit of God, like that of which they had witnessed the manifestations. It was the object of the remainder of his speech to prove that this spirit had been outpoured by that same Jesus of Nazareth* whom they had nailed to the cross, but whose resurrection and deliverance from the throes of death were foreshadowed in the Psalms of his glorious ancestor.

"The power with which this speech came home to the minds of the hearers; the force and fearlessness with which it was delivered by one who, not two months before, had been frightened, by the mere question of a curious girl, into the denial of his Lord; the insight into Scripture which it evinced in men who so recently had shown themselves but 'fools and slow of heart' to believe all that the prophets had spoken concerning Christ;† the three thousand who were at once baptized into a profession of the new faith,—were themselves the most convincing proofs—proofs even more convincing than rushing wind and strange tongues and lambent flames—that now indeed the promise of the Paraclete had been fulfilled, and that a new æon had begun in God's dealings with the world."—*Farrar*, "*Life of Paul*," vol. i., chap. v.

The following extract is from F. W. Robertson's "Lectures on Corinthians":—

"We pass on now to a subject much more difficult: what is meant by the gift of tongues?

"From the account given in the second chapter of Acts, in which 'Parthians, Medes, the dwellers in Mesopotamia,' and various others, said of those who had the gift of tongues that they spoke so that the multitude 'heard, every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God,' it is generally taken for granted that it was a miraculous gift of speaking foreign languages, and that the object of such a gift was the conversion of the heathen world. After a long and patient examination of the subject, I humbly doubt this altogether; and I do not think that it seems tenable for ten minutes of fair discussion. I believe that the gift was a far higher one than that of the linguist.

"And first, for this reason among others, that Saint Paul prefers prophecy to the gift

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* See Deut. xvi. 11.

† It cannot be "new wine," as in the A. V. and R. V. both; for Pentecost fell in June, and the vintage was in August.

‡ Acts ii. 15. There is a slight excuse for this insult, since spiritual emotion may produce effects similar to those which result from intoxication (Eph. v. 18; 1 Sam. x. 10, 11; xviii. 10; Heb., "raved"). Compare the German expression, *ein Gott-trunkener Mann*.

§ 1 Cor. xiv. 32. ‖ Acts ii. 14.

* Acts ii. 22. † Luke xxiv. 25.

of 'tongues' because of its being more useful, since prophecy edified others, and tongues did not. Now could he have said this, had the gift been the power of speaking foreign languages? Was there no tendency to edification,—no profitableness in a gift which would have so marvellously facilitated preaching to the nations of the world? We will proceed to collect the hints given, of the effects of the gift, and of the gift itself, which are to be found in this chapter.*

"We gather, first, that the 'tongues' were inarticulate or incoherent. In the second verse it is said, 'No man understandeth him.' And, lest you should say this is just what would be true of foreign languages, observe that the tongues spoken of were rather of the nature of an impassioned utterance of dovotional feeling than of preaching intended to be understood. The man spoke with tongues,—'not unto men, but unto God.' And what is this but that rapt, ecstatic outpouring of unutterable feeling for which language is insufficient and poor, in which a man is not trying to make himself logically clear to men, but pouring out his soul to God?

"Again, in the fourth verse, 'He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself.' Here we find another characteristic point given: this gift was something internal, a kind of inspired and impassionate soliloquy, or, it may be, meditation uttered aloud. There was an unconscious need of expressing audibly the feelings arising within; but, when so uttered, they merely ended, as the apostle says, in 'edifying' the person who uttered them. May I, without profaneness, compare these utterances, by way of illustration, to the broken murmur with which a poet, full of deep thought, might be supposed, in solitude or in unconsciousness of the presence of others, to put his feelings into incoherent muttered words? What would this be but an exercise of feeling, irrepressible, bursting into utterance for relief, and so edifying itself?

"Once again, in the seventh and eighth verses: 'And even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For, if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?'—where the apostle proceeds to compare the gift of 'tongues' with the unworded and inarticulate sounds of musical instruments. These have a meaning, Saint Paul does not say they have none; but he says that, not being definite, they are unintelligible except to a person in sympathy with the same mood of feeling as that of him who plays the pipe or trumpet. And, although they have a meaning, it is one which is felt rather than measured by the intellect. To the mere understanding, musical sounds signify nothing. The mathematician would ask, 'What does that prove?' the historian would say, 'Tell us what information or fact does it communicate.' So also we see that one speaking with 'tongues' would leave on most people a vague indefinite impression, as of a wild, rude melody, —the utterance of feelings felt to be infinite, and incapable of being put into words.

"Have you ever heard the low moanings of hopelessness? or those airs which to us are harsh and unmelodious, but which to the Swiss mountaineer tell of home, bringing him back to the scenes of his childhood; speaking to him in a language clearer than the tongue? or have you ever listened to the merry, unmeaning shouts of boyhood, getting rid of exuberance of life, uttering in sound a joy which boyhood only knows, and for which manhood has no words? Well, in all these you have dim illustrations of the way in which new feelings, deep feelings, irrepressible feelings, found for themselves utterance in sounds which were called 'tongues.'

"Again, they are spoken of in another way in the twenty-third verse. 'If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and others come in there that are unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad?' Thus the sound of these utterances of strong feeling, when unrepressed, and *weakly* allowed full vent, was like the ravings of insanity. So, indeed, men did imagine on the day of Pentecost: 'Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new, (sweet) wine.' Remember it was a great part of the apostle's object in this chapter to remind the Corinthians that they were bound to control this power, else it would degenerate into mere imbecility or fanaticism. Feeling is a precious gift; but, when men parade it, ex-

* 1 Cor. xiv.

hibit it, and give way to it, it is weakness instead of strength.

"Lastly, let us consider the eleventh verse: 'Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.' Here the gift is compared to a barbarian tongue to a man speaking what the hearer knew not. Therefore, we see that it is not a barbarian tongue itself which is here intended, but merely that the indefinable language uttered is likened to one.

"Here, however, we arrive at a most important peculiarity in this gift. From the thirteenth verse we learn that it could be interpreted. And without this interpretation the 'tongues' were obviously useless. The gift might be a personal indulgence and luxury, but to the world it was valueless: as in the fourteenth verse, 'My spirit prayeth, but my understanding remaineth unfruitful.' Now, if it had been a foreign language, it would have been simply necessary that the interpreter should be a native of the country where the language was spoken. But here the power of interpretation is reckoned a spiritual gift from God as much as the power of tongues,—a gift granted in answer to prayer. 'Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue *pray* that he may interpret.'

"Now this we shall best understand by analogies. It is a great principle that all the deeper feelings can only be comprehended by one who is in the same state of feeling as the person who utters or attempts to utter them. Sympathy is the only condition for interpretation of feeling. Take the apostle's own illustration: he compares the gift of tongues to music. Now music needs an interpreter; and the interpretation must be given, not in words, but in corresponding feelings. There must be 'music in the soul' as the condition of understanding harmony: to him who has not this the language of music is simply unintelligible. None but one of kindred spirit with the sweet singer of Israel could interpret the melodies of David: others who felt not with him said, as of the prophet of old, 'Doth he not speak in parables?'

"Take another instance where the feelings need interpretation. A child is often the subject of feelings which he does not understand. Observe how he is affected by the reading of a tale or a moving hymn: he will not say, 'How touching! how well imagined!' but he will hide his face, or he hums or laughs, or becomes peevish, because he does not know what is the matter with him. He is ashamed of sensations which he does not understand. He has no words like a man to express his new feelings. One not understanding him would say it was caprice and ill-behavior. But the grown man can interpret them; and, sympathizing with the child, he says, 'The child cannot contain his feelings.'

"In the same way the early Christians, being the subjects of new, deep, and spiritual feeling, declared their joy, their aspiration, their ecstatic devotion, in inarticulate utterances. They felt truths which were just as true and deep to them as when articulately expressed. But the drawing out of these emotions into words, the explaining what they felt, and what their hurried huddled words unconsciously meant,—that was the office of the interpreter. For example, a stranger might have been at a loss to know what was really meant. 'Are you happy or miserable, O Christian, by those wild utterances? Is it madness, or new wine, or inspiration?' And none but a person in the same mood of mind, or one who had passed through that mood and understood it by the unerring tact of sympathy, could say to the stranger, 'This is the overflow of gratefulness: it is a hymn of joy that his heart is singing to itself,' or, 'It is a burst of prayer.' And, therefore, Saint Paul writes the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth verses, which contain the very points I have mentioned, 'praying,' 'singing,' 'blessing,' and 'giving of thanks.' It seems to me that the early Christians were the subjects of feelings too deep to be put into words."—*F. W. Robertson, "Lectures on Corinthians," Lecture XXV.*

So far as the views which we reject are concerned, it is enough that we leave them alone. There is nothing for us to destroy and no one for us to oppose in relation to our religious progress. All we have to do is to go forward, and no one can keep us back if resolutely we fix our minds and hearts upon what is before.

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